Greetings from Kyoto-U

楽友 Raku-Yu

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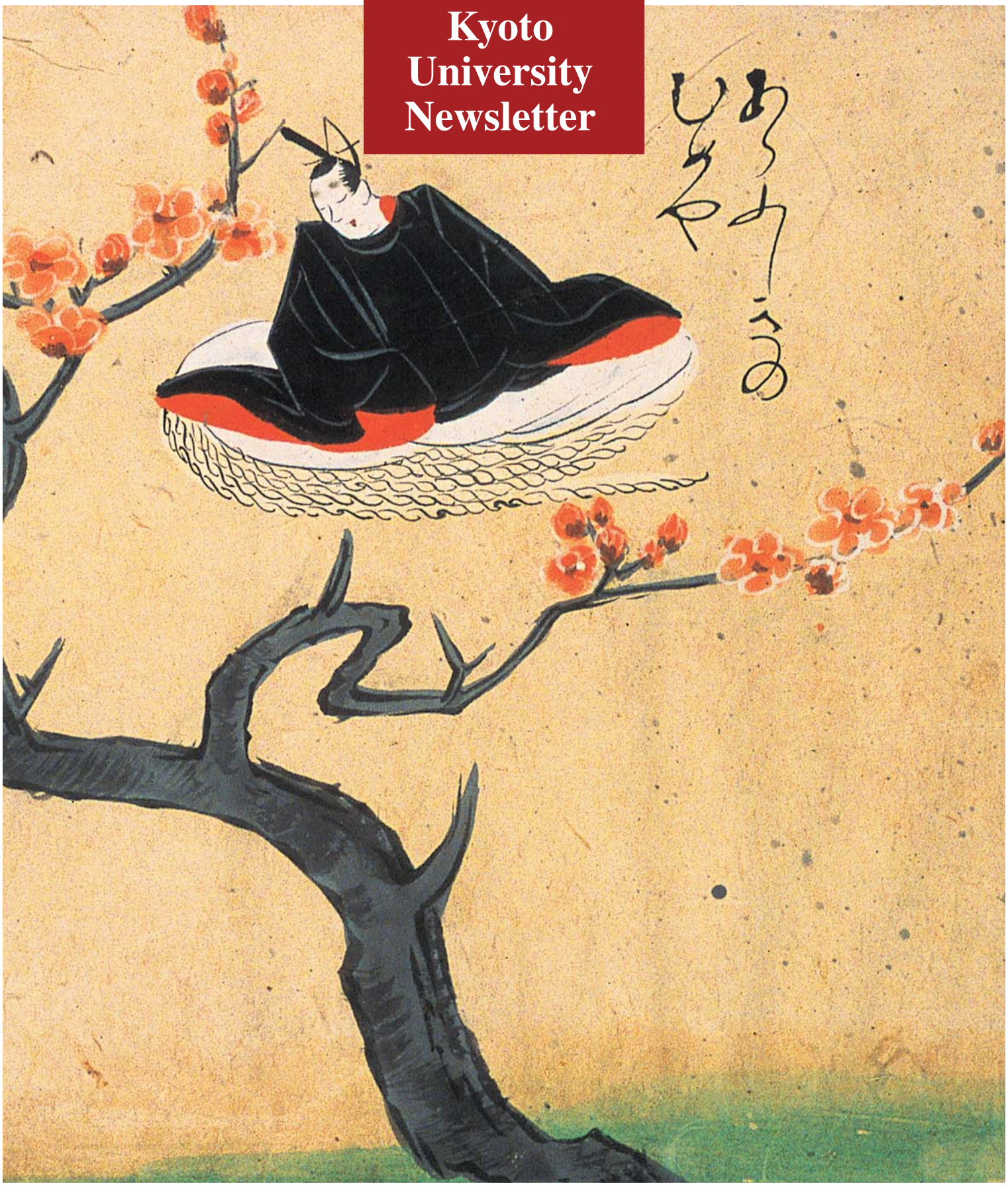

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Editor's Notes

Kyoto University is one of Japan's largest research universities, including fourteen affiliated institutes and many other centers. Primate Research Institute, established in 1967, is a research hub of the world. Wildlife Research Center was established in 2008 with Primate Research Institute as its parent institution. This volume of *Raku-Yu* contains two news on primate research: results of chimpanzee minds by our cognitive scientist and new facilities for the bonobo research. Chimpanzees and bonobos are key to the understanding of human beings. The Editors of *Raku-Yu* feel proud and happy to deliver the news from cutting-edge research activities. Kyoto University has the largest number of the institutes and research centers which are designated as Joint Usage / Research Centers by the Japanese Government. These institutions are also committed to Kyoto University's graduate education, having their own doctoral programs. We hope that more scientists and students will be encouraged to join us at Kyoto.

Cover: *The Flying Plum and the Minister* from the Nara illustrated book *Kanshojo* (Collection of the Library of the Graduate School of Letters and Faculty of Letters, purchased in 1912 from Mr. Seiichi Shikada)

During the mid-Heian Period (794-1192), Michizane Sugawara (845-903) was promoted to the Minister of the Right in the Japanese imperial court. Although his family did not belong to the high class of court nobles, he was very charming, learned, and talented in various performing arts. His rapid promotion, however, made the Minister of the Left jealous. Falsely accused by the Minister of the Left of having committed arson in the imperial court, Sugawara was exiled to Dazaifu in Kyushu. He missed Kyoto very much, particularly the plum tree in his garden. According to legend, one night the plum tree flew to Dazaifu and spread its roots there to console its master. It is believed that the sacred plum tree we now see at Dazaifu Temmangu Shrine (Dazaifu city, Fukuoka prefecture) is this "flying plum" tree. The cover of this issue depicts Michizane Sugawara and the flying plum tree in a unique composition.

After Sugawara's death, plague and various natural disasters broke out one after another. The Minister of the Left, who had falsely accused Sugawara, was struck by lightning. He died in a very miserable state with his skull and other bones broken into pieces. Attributing this to the angry spirit of Sugawara, people began to worship him as a deity. Today, Sugawara is revered as the god of scholarship. There are about 4,000 shrines nationwide dedicated to him, including Kitano Temmangu Shrine in Kyoto. Although these shrines are visited by worshippers throughout the year, they are particularly crowded from winter to early spring, when students come to pray for success in university entrance examinations.

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A Note on Order of Names

As a general rule, names appearing in *Raku-Yu* are written in given name/family name order.

楽
Raku-Yu means to respect, treasure, and enjoy one's friendship.
友

This name was taken from the assembly hall called "*Raku-Yu Kaikan*" that commemorated the 25th anniversary of the founding of Kyoto University.

Hidetoshi KOTERA Executive Vice-President Kotera was born in 1957. Upon graduating from the Graduate School of Engineering at Kyoto University in 1982, he joined Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., Ltd. (now Panasonic Corporation). While engaged in research and development at its Central Research Laboratory for 11 years, he earned his doctorate in engineering in 1992. In 1993, he was assigned an associate professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering, Kyoto University, and was promoted to professor in 2000. After serving as head of the President's Office from 2008, in October 2012 he was appointed as Executive Vice-President for External Strategy, Knowledge & Technology Transfer and Innovation.

Kyoto University places the utmost priority on external strategy and industry-government-academia partnerships, regarding them as essential means of contributing to society. "To date, we have been eager to engage in industry-academia collaboration, which connects the seeds of basic research conducted at Kyoto University with applied technologies possessed by private companies," Professor Kotera said. "To resolve the problems of contemporary society, which is becoming increasingly complex, however, we must also collaborate with other universities and research institutes in the world." Professor Kotera believes that he should exert his leadership in building global networks of universities so as to overcome various challenges common to all people in the world. He is also eager to promote public relations, and thus he believes, "*Raku-yu* and other university journals play leading roles in sharing information and reinforcing partnerships with alumni who are active on the global stage.

Roles that a university should fulfill are education, research, and contribution to society.

Since October 1, 2012, I have been assuming the office of the Executive Vice-President for External Strategy, Knowledge & Technology Transfer and Innovation. Among the diverse forms of social contribution that a university must engage in, external strategy and industry-government-academia partnerships, which I am responsible for, are particularly important.

In relation to external strategy, we are committed in various programs to promote partnerships with society. It is essential to disclose details of the university's educational and research activities, their outcomes, and the present state of the university with sufficient levels of accuracy in a timely manner. In addition to issuing various journals and reports both on- and offline, we must also collect information and receive suggestions from outside the university. With this view, we have been reviewing and improving our activities in public relations. Moreover, we actively support the establishment of new alumni associations of former students and faculty/staff members, as well as activities of existing groups. At present, Kyoto University Alumni (federation of all alumni associations) comprises 98 alumni associations (75 in Japan and 23 outside Japan). By hosting various events for alumni, Kyoto University Alumni works to promote mutual exchange among alumni and reinforce their ties with the university.

To win the current severe international competition, it is indispensable to reinforce the university's finances by raising donations. With contributions from both the public and private sectors, we intend to provide scholarships to students and young researchers desiring to study abroad, to support international students at Kyoto University in various ways, including support for improving their living environment, and to reinforce support for students' extracurricular activities.

In relation to industry-government-academia partnerships, I believe that universities must share the results of their research activities with the society at large. At Kyoto University, the Office of Society-Academia Collaboration for Innovation (SACI) is engaged in the following three programs: initiating and promoting industry-academia collaboration projects, securing intellectual properties, and promoting technological transfers. I believe it is the mission of Kyoto University to promote industry-academia collaboration programs in which universities play leading roles and lead innovation throughout Japan. However, this cannot be fulfilled by the efforts of one university alone. We must work to build more organizational and more comprehensive industry-academia collaboration programs, unparalleled by any in the past. With this in mind, I am seeking to build a network that involves universities, research institutes, and companies in Japan and abroad, a network known as the Industry-University-University-Industry (IUUI) collaboration.

Finally, it is my sincere hope that we promote industry-academia collaborations, create innovation, and expand the sharing of information and knowledge with society by seeking cooperation from all members of Kyoto University, as well as from the society at large.

Hidetoshi KOTERA
Executive Vice-President of Kyoto University

Welcome to Japan's Research Shangri-La
The Attraction of the *Hakubi* Project

In the *Hakubi* Project, Kyoto University provides promising researchers with an excellent research environment by appointing them as either an associate professor or an assistant professor for a period of five years. To enable them to concentrate on their particular research activities, they are also released from administrative duties. In this sense, their research environment can truly be regarded as ideal.

The term "*hakubi*," which literally means "white eyebrows," originated during the Three Kingdoms period in ancient China. In that period, the Ma family had five sons, all with extraordinary talents. Of those, Ma Liang, the fourth eldest son who was particularly gifted, had white hairs in his eyebrows. Hence, *hakubi* has come to mean talents which stand out from the rest.

Since the inauguration of the *Hakubi* Project during the academic year of 2009, a total of 74 researchers from Japan and abroad have been appointed as *Hakubi* members. For this issue of *Raku-yu*, your correspondent had the pleasure of bringing together four *Hakubi* researchers for a reflective discussion. They discussed the attractive features of their research environment, their future plans based on their achievements as *Hakubi* researchers, and ways to maintain this ideal research environment. If you are interested in the early days of the *Hakubi* Project, please refer to the 19th issue of *Raku-yu*.

Attendees:

Tomoko TATEYA
Research interests: otolaryngology and developmental biology

Hirohide SAITO
Research interests: bioengineering and synthetic biology

Kanehiro NISHIMURA
Research interests: linguistics

Jeremy RAPPLEYE
Research interests: education policy and theory

Observer:

Koji TANAKA, Director of the Hakubi Center for Advanced Research
Research interests: Southeast Asian studies

Attractive points of the *Hakubi* Project

Moderator: To begin with, will you tell me which aspect of the *Hakubi* Project was the most attractive for you?

Saito: After serving as an assistant professor for five years, I wanted to develop my career in a research environment that would allow me to work in a more independent manner. Just at that time, I saw the website of the *Hakubi* Project for the first time. I was so attracted by the offer of an environment in which I could thoroughly concentrate on my research activities for five years.

Nishimura: To be honest, I applied for the project simply in order to survive as a researcher. Since few job options were available for researchers in the humanities, joining the *Hakubi* Project was one of the few options I had at that time.

Rappleye: I decided to apply for the project because only a few programs let you concentrate on research activities for five years on a theme of your own choice. As far as I know, only the *Hakubi* Project offers such an opportunity to young researchers, since none of the similar programs in the United States and the EU are designed for younger researchers. Secondly, I was fascinated by the ancient capital, Kyoto. Its beauty is unrivaled by any city in the world. As a social science researcher, I am inspired every day by Kyoto and its rich culture.

Tateya: I am specializing in the development of the inner ear. Since this is a truly minor field in basic medical science, I used to work in a laboratory concerned with the central nervous system, which made me feel as though I were a bit of a freeloader! When I heard that the *Hakubi* Center welcomes researchers with original research themes, I thought that perhaps I was a suitable candidate for the *Hakubi* Project.

Attractive features of *Hakubi* researchers

Moderator: What merits did you find after joining the *Hakubi* Project?

Nishimura: Since we are all in different research fields, we do not understand all the exact details of other researchers' academic fields. However, I have faith that they are leaders in their field and thus respect them all. How wonderful is an environment like that? So I enjoy discussing a variety of topics with my colleagues very openly and constructively.

Saito: Since everyone else has research interests different from mine, I was not so sure if I would be able to get along with them all. At the suggestion of Director Tanaka, however, we began to gather at the *Hakubi* Seminar every other week. I enjoyed talking with the other members, since they are very good at discussing and presenting their research activities. At the seminar meetings, I have begun to learn about the leading frontiers of research in different academic fields. I have also begun to see various themes and topics from the viewpoint of researchers in other fields. When I give a presentation, I often receive questions that I have never expected, since the audience members come at the same problem from totally different angles. I have never experienced such a Q&A session at the academic meetings I have attended before. It's so stimulating and inspiring to receive such questions!

Tateya: All *Hakubi* researchers describe details of their own research programs in a truly attractive manner. At the same time, they show their keen interest in a wide variety of topics, in addition to those related to their own research fields. I believe they are all highly educated and cultured people. Moreover, they are eager to communicate. It is truly exciting to have lively discussions, solely driven by curiosity. It was the first time for me to enjoy such stimulating conversations. Of course, topics on a specific research theme are difficult for outsiders to understand. However, I can feel the charm of these researchers, regardless of the differences in academic disciplines.

Rappleye: I agree. When I gave a presentation for the first time at the *Hakubi* Seminar, I received totally unexpected questions from audience members, whose research interests differed from mine. However, we always hold stimulating and deep discussions since we all respect one another and we are all very curious. Asking many questions from diverse angles sometimes leads us to focus on even wider themes. For instance, we sometimes hold intellectual discussions about philosophical concepts such as time and space.


Jeremy RAPPLEYE


Kanehiro NISHIMURA


Hirohide SAITO

On such occasions, we begin to feel a deep respect towards the other researchers.

Products of exchanges among researchers of different disciplines

Moderator: I understand that researchers of diverse disciplines discuss and ask questions to one another from different viewpoints. Does this sometimes open new perspectives for your research programs?

Tateya: I believe so. Moreover, if you have held in-depth discussions with researchers in other academic fields, this experience helps you become a good leader with a deep cultural respect. This, I believe, is important for future leaders.

Nishimura: I believe that it will take a long time before we can see the impacts from a fusion of various disciplines. In my view, the *Hakubi* Project hasn't yet presented a success story, although I believe it will. I hope to see how my colleagues will assimilate the influence of such a fusion into their own research activities, so that I may use their cases as a reference.

Saito: As a life-scientist, I am interested in what ways a life has been formed. I sometimes discuss this with researchers in other fields, and I find it truly interesting and inspiring. For instance, when I prepare a model of a certain life form, I discuss with researchers of astrophysical simulations to determine whether or not I can apply their theories to my own work. It is so stimulating to hold discussions with them, since I am always looking for something that I can use in my own research. Through multidisciplinary discussions, we can learn about viewpoints that are new and unfamiliar to us, along with different approaches that we don't usually use in our own academic field. By adopting new approaches, we may be able to engage in innovative research programs. When we meet an obstacle, it can be a great help to have colleagues of diverse perspectives from whom we can seek advice. I am grateful to have such colleagues, and hope we can continue to help each other with our respective research activities.

Tateya: I believe that through holding multidisciplinary discussions, I have begun to take a comprehensive, panoramic view regarding my own research field. Many people believe that the humanities are not of practical use, compared, say, with the natural sciences. The humanities may not improve our daily lives immediately, but I believe that all academic fields, including the humanities, can enrich our lives. I have begun to consider the position of my research programs within the entire scope of science. I believe that I was able to attain such a holistic view through exchanges with researchers in different disciplines.

Nishimura: Before joining the *Hakubi* Project, I used to believe that researchers in the humanities don't necessarily have to make efforts to promote an understanding of their study outcomes or the significance of their studies in society. After joining the project, however, I changed my mind. After observing the work of my natural science colleagues, I now understand that researchers in the natural sciences strive to convey messages to the public, the message as to the value of their research programs. Through their efforts they gain support from society, obtain considerable funds from governments, and deliver the outcomes of their research activities to society. By following their lead, it is clear to me that researchers in the humanities, including myself, must also make a much greater effort to enhance the social recognition of the humanities.

Rappleye: Since November 2011, I have held regular discussions about issues related to philosophy and sociology with another *Hakubi* researcher. Every Friday afternoon, we discuss a book we have chosen from among diverse areas for three to four hours. He is a researcher in forestry, while I specialize in pedagogy. So our research interests are completely different, but transcending these academic boundaries, I feel that we share a mutual recognition of the deeper philosophical issues. I believe that it is only the *Hakubi* Project that can provide such an opportunity to researchers.

Saito: I believe that researchers in my field, bioengineering, perhaps enjoy a more favorable environment than those specializing in other fields, since it is easier to gain society's recognition and support for our research activities. In other words, people understand that our studies will benefit society. However, we must be careful about our research processes. In addition to setting clear goals, it is very important to find ways to make effective use of unexpected results and seemingly absurd ideas for advancing research programs. I find it very interesting to discuss with researchers in the humanities since they take different approaches and have different ways of thinking from us. We often discuss various issues over a beer or two; for instance, we once discussed where human consciousness originated and what the definition of subconsciousness was. On such occasions, I enjoy listening to widely differing views. I hope that we will have more opportunities to have such discussions.

Concerns of *Hakubi* researchers

Nishimura: Immediately after joining the project, I was astonished researchers in the natural sciences were engaged in large-scale projects with considerable budgets. I felt I wanted to engage myself in a bigger project like them. To make my own project much bigger, I tried to combine various themes, though they were not always closely related to each other. After two years, however, I reviewed my own approach more rationally. This led me to realize that I was probably driven by an inflated feeling of self-worth. Now I have regained my own approach to research activities. I believe that researchers in the humanities need not compete with natural scientists in terms of speed and scale.

Rappleye: I had a similar experience. In the first year of the *Hakubi* Project, I believed that I had to work faster in order to keep my position. Recently, however, I have changed my attitude. I slowed down the pace of my studies so that I am more able to delve into problems in a deeper way. Now, however, I'm a little concerned that I may not be able to complete the present research program in my remaining three years in the *Hakubi* Project.

Nishimura: Sometimes, when I consider my theme from broader perspectives, it paradoxically becomes more difficult to write a paper. I imagine that researchers in the natural sciences also feel this dilemma.

Saito: Research activities in the natural sciences are more demanding, I believe.

Researchers in life sciences must demonstrate our research outcomes in five years at the longest. As Mr. Nishimura has just said, to broaden our perspectives, we need time to stop and think. We also need time before our ideas mature. In my case, however, before long I'm going to enter the final year of the *Hakubi* Project, so it is difficult for me to find time to stop and think and have discussions with as many people as I would like. Probably, all researchers feel the same way.

Tateya: Shortly after I joined the *Hakubi* Project, I was surprised to discover that time passes differently in different academic disciplines! A researcher in mathematics, for instance, once told me that several years are required to verify a submitted mathematical paper, so you must wait years before your paper is accepted. In the life sciences, usually a paper is checked in one month or so.

Hakubi researchers are not evaluated.

Moderator: I understand that the term for *Hakubi* researchers is five years. Depending on the type of discipline, will there also be differences in the research outcomes to be achieved during this period?

Tateya: That is likely. However, in the *Hakubi* Project, we need not exhibit our achievements. We will not be evaluated. Isn't that great? There is neither a mid-term nor a final evaluation.

Tanaka: Every year, we ask *Hakubi* researchers to submit a report on the progress of their research activities. However, we never use these annual reports to evaluate researchers or their programs. In this project, we select promising researchers whom we believe will lead their respective academic fields, or other fields, after five years, and we encourage them to build their own capacity so that they will be able to fulfill this goal. The *Hakubi* Center dares to provide them with an environment that allows them to purely concentrate on their research activities for five years, without being concerned about evaluations or competition from other researchers. We believe this to be the ideal environment for any researcher.

Moderator: Doesn't a system without any evaluation impose a sort of pressure on you? Or don't you feel there's a risk of becoming lazy?

Saito: We are given a five-year time allowance. During this time, maybe we can become "corrupt" by becoming lazy, but in five years, we must each find our next post by ourselves. For me, the five-year period without any evaluation is so valuable since it allows me to pursue what I truly want to know, while broadening my perspectives by exchanging views with many researchers in other academic fields.

Tanaka: We must first enhance the brand value of the *Hakubi* Project. If the simple fact that you have been selected by Kyoto University as a *Hakubi* researcher proves your superiority as a researcher, the *Hakubi* Project will become a gateway to success in the academic world. I do hope that ex-*Hakubi* researchers will be active on the global stage. This will surely enhance the reputation of Kyoto University, and enhance the brand value of *Hakubi* researchers.

Moderator: How do you feel about the *Hakubi* brand?

Tateya: I truly hope that the *Hakubi* Project will continue for many more years. To enhance the social recognition of the project, I must work harder so as not to disgrace the value of *Hakubi* researchers. I don't want others to consider that while some *Hakubi* researchers are excellent, others are not. Since other members are doing such good jobs, I am striving to do my part as well.

Rappleye: Recently I feel that its brand value is rising. When I offer my name card that introduces myself as a *Hakubi* researcher, an increasing number of people show they have heard of the program. Outside Japan, *Hakubi* is yet to be recognized though. I'm sure that when non-Japanese researchers who join the *Hakubi* Project become faculty members at leading overseas universities, *Hakubi* will become known to many more people around the world.

Visions stemming from experiences at the Hakubi Center

Moderator: Finally, will you please tell me of your ambitions and the future plans for your research activities?

Tateya: I can't imagine what I'm going to do after leaving the *Hakubi* Center. Right now, I'm only concentrating on completing my present program.

Nishimura: I will continue to pursue my own style of research activities. As a member of the *Hakubi* Project, I have seen diverse styles of research and educational activities. I want to study those diverse styles to determine my future direction and develop my own vision. Someday, I hope to tell my future students, "Build up your own capacity so that you will be able to trust in yourself, whatever people around you say."

Rappleye: Kyoto University has established the Institute for Liberal Arts and Sciences with the aim of developing students that can be active on the global stage. If possible, after completing the *Hakubi* Project, I want to establish my own laboratory within the Institute. I have a vision to establish, say a center for educational policy, which will bring together researchers from developing countries and provide them with research opportunities, just as the *Hakubi* Project has done for me. I hope that this type of center will propose creative and innovative education policies.

Saito: My research goal is to promote our understanding of what a cell really is, and ultimately, how life itself is formed. At the same time, I hope to develop technologies that will be useful in diverse fields. While engaging in such research activities, I also hope to engage in educational programs in which I can thoroughly impart the joy of studying to students. My former mentor used to say, "Few people excel at both research and educational activities." So I want to excel at both. I believe that the greatest asset I have developed in the *Hakubi* Project is the friendships I have fostered. I really hope to maintain these friendships with other *Hakubi* researchers. I also hope to learn diverse perspective from them, and, by assimilating their perspectives, I will strive to develop innovative research programs. In this way, I hope to become a researcher that truly benefits society.


Koji TANAKA


Tomoko TATEYA

Next-Generation Hybrid Operating Room at Kyoto University Hospital in Operation

(November 14, 2013)

Kyoto University Hospital has been installing an integrated Smart Imaging Circuit (iSIC), which is an intraoperative diagnostic imaging system supporting advanced surgical treatment, in an operating room. As part of this effort, the next-generation hybrid operating room recently came into service.

A next-generation hybrid operating room is a surgical system in which a navigation system, angiography equipment, an operating table, a sophisticated PACS viewer and an image server are connected in a network, unlike hybrid operating rooms equipped with a conventional angiography system. This is the first time this system has been used in Japan. The system not only provides high-quality images of blood vessels and various organs, but also allows real-time three-dimensional imaging and three-dimensional image analysis, and the information thus obtained can be used immediately to support surgery.

Introduction of the system has established a new safer treatment system involving a reduced burden on patients. The Departments of Cardiovascular Surgery and Cardiovascular Medicine plan to use this system for transcatheter aortic valve implantation (TAVI), and the Departments of Neurosurgery, Otorhinolaryngology and Orthopaedic Surgery plan to use it for difficult treatment of intracranial disease, spinal disease and cervicofacial disease.

New Research Program Using Bonobos That Have Not Been in Japan for a While

(December 3, 2013)

Kumamoto Sanctuary (KS), Wildlife Research Center, Kyoto University, received four bonobos to help in the exploration of the evolutionary basis of human nature.

Along with chimpanzees, bonobos are the closest living relatives of humans. Wild bonobos live only in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in Africa. Currently, because of the radical decrease in their population, bonobos are in peril of extinction.

The four bonobos that KS received came from San Diego Zoo. Their names, sex, and, age are as follows.

Name		
	Junior	Connie-Lenore
M/F	Male	Female
Date of Birth	Jan. 14, 1995	Feb. 3, 1982
Name		
	Lolita	Ikela
M/F	Female	Female
Date of Birth	Apr. 20, 1989	Nov. 27, 1991

Significance of comparative studies of chimpanzees and bonobos

Although both chimpanzees and bonobos are close relatives of humans and are similar in appearance, their social organization and behavior is remarkably different. Generally speaking, chimpanzees are aggressive, form male-dominated societies, and use a variety of tools in the wild. Bonobos, on the other hand, are relatively gentle, form female-dominated societies, and rarely use tools in the wild. Studies of these differences are expected to lead to a deeper understanding of the evolutionary basis of human cognition, behavior, and social formation.

The first scientific investigations of bonobos in Japan to be conducted at KS are expected to result in novel findings. For safety reasons, KS facilities are not open to the public at present.

Measurements of Brain Response in Chimpanzees

In evolutionary terms, chimpanzees are the creatures closest to human beings. Although the evolution of our appearance and posture can be traced by excavating fossils, the behavior and mind of humans cannot be learned from these fossil records. Chimpanzee research helps us understand the origins of human nature. For decades, chimpanzees and other primates have been studied intensively from comparative, cognitive, and evolutionary perspectives. Various aspects of cognition have been investigated through dozens of field and laboratory studies, generally using behavioral responses as indices.

In addition to the accumulation of behavioral data, the neural bases for cognitive processing in the chimpanzee remains to be clarified. To increase our knowledge of the evolutionary and neural bases of human cognition, comparative neurophysiological studies exploring endogenous neural activities in the awake state are needed. However, to date, such studies have rarely been reported in non-human hominid species, due to the practical difficulties in conducting non-invasive measurements on awake individuals.

In human studies, various techniques, such as electroencephalograms (EEGs), positron emission tomography (PET), and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), have been introduced to explore the underlying neural activities connected with perceptual, motor, and cognitive processing. Event-related potentials (ERPs), a transient pattern in a surface-recorded EEG, is another method that is broadly applied to adult and infant studies; the advantages are temporal resolution and, in particular, convenience of measurement. Compared to other techniques, ERP is more tolerant of the subject's physical movements during measurement; therefore, it is more suitable for subjects whose movements are difficult to regulate.

After a long period of step-by-step training, we succeeded in producing EEGs in a fully-awake adult chimpanzee for the first time. After this first success, we conducted a series of experiments to investigate the neural basis of chimpanzee cognition by obtaining ERPs for various auditory and visual stimuli.

In the first study, we focused on a well-documented component of ERPs to auditory stimuli in human studies, where it is well known that the brain responds differently to infrequent, physically deviant tones compared to frequent tones. Such an ERP component is termed "mismatch negativity" (MMN). We measured auditory ERPs of the subject chimpanzee in response to infrequent, deviant tones that were delivered in a uniform sound stream. The results showed MMN-like components in the chimpanzee when she heard the deviant tone, which was comparable to human MMN.

The second study investigated ERPs of the chimpanzee when she heard the sound of her own name. ERPs were measured for each of the following auditory stimuli: the vocal sound of the subject's own name; the vocal sound of a familiar name of another group member; the vocal sound of an unfamiliar name; and a non-vocal sound. Some differences in ERP waveforms were detected between the types of stimuli at a latency at which Nc components (a negative component at a latency of approximately 500 ms (ms stands for millisecond; 1/1000 second) following stimulus onset, which is considered to reflect orientation of attention) are typically observed in humans. Following stimulus onset, an Nc-like negative shift at approximately 500 ms latency was observed, particularly in response to the subject's own name. Such specific ERP patterns suggest that the chimpanzee processes her name differently from other sounds.

In the third study, ERPs were measured while a fully-awake chimpanzee observed photographs of familiar and unfamiliar chimpanzee faces and human faces. The ERPs evoked by chimpanzee faces differentiated unfamiliar individuals from familiar ones around midline areas centered on vertex sites at approximately 200 ms after the stimulus onset. In addition, the ERP response to the image of the subject's own face did not significantly diverge from those evoked by familiar chimpanzees, suggesting that the subject's brain, at a minimum, remembered the image of her own face. The ERPs evoked by human faces were not influenced by the familiarity of target individuals. These results indicate that chimpanzee neural representations are more sensitive to the familiarity of conspecific (same species) than allospecific (different species) faces.

The last study investigated chimpanzee brain response to affective (emotion-related) pictures. We measured the ERPs of the chimpanzee when she was observing pictures of chimpanzees showing affective expressions (affective pictures) and pictures without affective expressions (neutral pictures) (Figure 1). These pictures were a subset of the stimuli used in the chimpanzee memory experiment, in which enhanced memory for affective over neutral pictures was

found. In sum, the study tested whether differential brain responses to affective and neutral pictures could be found that coincided with evidence of enhanced memory of affective pictures. The results revealed a differential brain potential appearing 210 ms after presentation of an affective picture, a pattern similar to that in humans (Figure 2). Studies with humans suggest that the component in this latency range can be interpreted as reflecting amygdala processing of affective information and is believed to reflect selective attention to affective images of intrinsic relevance. The present study suggests that this process is similar in humans and chimpanzees. The results also have implications for the evolutionary foundations of emotional phenomena, such as emotional contagion and empathy.

In sum, we have succeeded in measuring scalp-surface brain potential in a fully-awake chimpanzee for the first time and our studies open the way for future studies comparing endogenous neural activities in humans and chimpanzees. This signifies a critical step in hominid cognitive neurosciences.

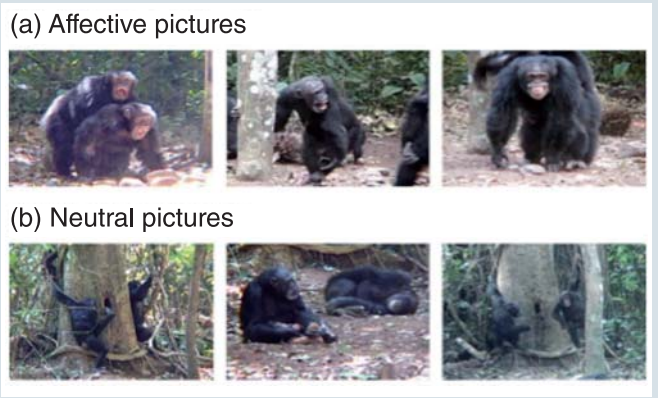

Figure 1: Affective and neutral pictures used in the experiment

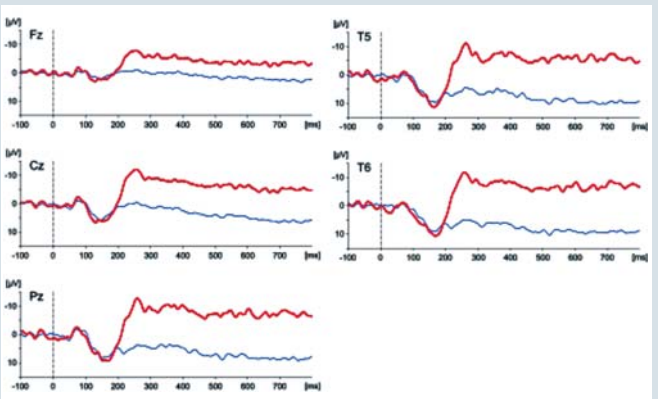

Figure 2: Average ERP waveforms to affective and neutral pictures at five scalp positions (Fz, Cz, Pz, T5, and T6). The lines indicated in thick red represent ERPs to affective pictures. The lines indicated in thin blue represent ERPs to neutral pictures.

Satoshi HIRATA

- Born in 1973
- Field of specialization: comparative cognitive science
- Ph.D., Kyoto University
- Professor, Wildlife Research Center, Kyoto University
- URL http://www.wrc.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en/members/hirata.html

Through studies of chimpanzees and bonobos, I want to clarify the evolutionary processes of human minds and intelligence.

During his boyhood, Professor Hirata, who was born into a family that managed a bookstore, loved reading all kinds of books. He was particularly interested in books on mathematics and physics. Even after entering the Faculty of Science at Kyoto University, he continued to harbor a vague aspiration to become a physicist. But then he realized it was not possible to use mathematical formulae to understand a brain that is trying to understand the cosmos by using mathematical formulae. What is actually happening in the brain? He then became interested in brain science. However, this led him to still another question: Can we really understand the activities of the brain's neural circuits by using our own brains? At that time, he happened to read a paper on chimpanzees' cognitive behavior. He then began studying the primates since he believed that he would be able to clarify the evolutionary processes of the human mind and social intelligence through the study of non-human primates from a comparative cognitive perspective.

Professor Hirata has developed some very simple and affordable experimental equipment, which is unlike any other. Using this system, known as the "Hirata Apparatus," he has revealed chimpanzees' cooperative behavior and made some important discoveries related to their delivery mechanisms. These results have attracted keen attention from around the world. Currently, he is engaged in research into "mental time." One factor that enables research activities on such a wide variety of themes is the Japanese laboratory system under which researchers build close relationships with the chimpanzees. Like zoo attendants, Japanese researchers take care of the chimpanzees by themselves. "The Western approach, in which the tasks of researchers and care-taking staff are clearly divided, might be more efficient," he said. "However, I want to know the smallest details about the daily lives of my chimpanzees." This research style keeps Professor Hirata busy around the clock. Last autumn, however, he began to take some leave, in order to take care of his second baby together with his wife. With a smile Professor Hirata said, "Probably, what I have learned by working with chimps will help me take care of my own baby!"

Understanding Contemporary American Politics in Comparative Context

What do you think of when you hear the term "contemporary American politics"? Some are likely to think of the politics of the superpower, which leads in international politics. Others might have in mind the great gap between the rich and the poor and intensifying conflicts between the two within the country. Still others might associate the term with the use of innovative media for political campaigns. All of these different images represent some aspects of contemporary American politics. It is also true that they do not converge into any single image.

This fact reminds me of an Indian fable, known as the *Story of the Blind Men and the Elephant*. The story goes like this: a group of blind men touch an elephant. The man who touches a leg says that the elephant is like a pillar. The one who feels the tail says it is like a rope. The one who touches the trunk says it is like a tree branch. The one who feels the belly says it is like a wall, and so forth. Like the elephant in this story, contemporary American politics allows researchers to explore many different images. In other words, it is impossible to describe American politics from any one angle, and, what is worse, an approach from a single angle could lead to misperception. It is particularly difficult for non-Americans, including Japanese researchers, to develop a holistic view of contemporary American politics since non-residents of the United States have difficulty gaining a natural sense of the contemporary political atmosphere. Many Japanese researchers discuss American politics by referring to specific individuals, particularly high-level governmental officials. Probably this is because such researchers need to compensate for their lack of innate feeling for American communities. In other words, being non-American, they have only limited access to primary information or human networks. Reliance on such information sources increases the risk of basing conclusions on mere speculation or a misreading of circumstances.

To protect against this type of bias, I believe that one effective approach is *relativization*, or comparative studies of contemporary American politics. The comparative approach can also be described as an attempt to eliminate the names of as many individual politicians as possible from analyses of American politics. In this approach, researchers examine various elements of contemporary American politics, and compare them with their counterpart in other countries, or with a similar element at another time in American history. Although American politics are commonly believed to be unique because of their unparalleled influence and great diversity, this approach enables researchers to consider American politics as the integration of many diverse elements, each of which can be compared.

Among the diverse elements of comparative politics, I myself pay particular attention to political institutions. It is commonly believed among political scientists that election systems and the separation of powers significantly influence the political situation. Specifically, these elements influence the behaviors of politicians and their constituents, and resulting policies. Employing the approach known as "comparative analysis of political institutions," I hope to clarify the fact that contemporary American politics are driven by the same logic (causal relations) as those in other democratic countries.

For example, a president of the United States is commonly believed to have great influence as the leader of a superpower. In actuality, however, a president only has limited political influence, particularly regarding domestic issues. In other words, an American president has more control over legislation in the foreign policy and defense domains than with domestic policies. In the United States, this dual nature of the presidency is well known as the "two presidencies." Yet, this dual nature has not yet been discussed sufficiently from the standpoint of comparative politics. Researchers of political institutions, however, are aware that the American presidential system is typically categorized as a "weak presidential system." Since American presidents have only limited constitutional power, and little capacity to engage in congressional elections. Knowing that American presidents have only limited power should help researchers avoid overestimating the influence of the personalities of individual presidents as it relates to respective policy issues. At the same time, this knowledge can allow researchers to focus their attention on the more general characteristics of contemporary American politics.

Roughly speaking, the comparative approach has two advantages. First, non-American researchers can develop

perspectives different from those of American political scientists. Political science in the United States is generally regarded to be at the highest level in the world. One result of this status is American researchers in the field overwhelm their counterparts in other countries in terms of both quantity and quality. Few contemporary American researchers researchers, however, take the approach of comparative politics, which is categorized as a different academic field in the United States. On the other hand, it is difficult to study contemporary American politics while being based in Japan. In addition to the disadvantage in accessibility to relevant materials and information, non-American researchers find it difficult to understand many issues that are taken for granted in the United States. By paying attention to political institutions and clarifying causal relations that determine political phenomena, however, researchers who are not based in the U.S. can convert such disadvantages into advantages, by presenting alternative approaches and perspectives in the literature.

Second, by employing a comparative approach, Japanese researchers should be able to analyze contemporary Japanese politics more objectively, or in other words *relativize* Japanese politics. In Japan, researchers of Japanese politics tend to be biased. By employing comparative analyses of political institutions, however, researchers can clarify characteristics of national-level parliamentary systems and party organizations, along with the effects of local-level dual representation systems or a version of the presidential systems without being influenced by their own bias. In reviewing my own research activities, I achieved more profound outcomes when I took the approach of comparative politics. I have also found that when I took this approach, my research results were accepted by international society with much greater ease. Accordingly, I believe this approach is effective in generally promoting international understanding of the results of research programs in political science conducted by Japanese researchers.

Satoshi MACHIDORI
- Born in 1971
- Field of specialization: Contemporary American Politics
- Completed master's degree at Kyoto University
- Ph.D., Kyoto University
- Professor, School of Government

I believe that the mission of political scientists is to explain to the public the logic behind political phenomena.

When Professor Machidori was a young boy, he loved to watch election returns on TV and analyze the trends of constituencies. This interest led naturally into a career as a political scientist. His current research themes primarily concern contemporary American politics, which he began studying in graduate school. "At that time, economic friction surfaced as a great problem between Japan and the United States," Professor Machidori explains. "A few U.S. Congressmen did a performance of hammering products made in Japan, but many Japanese people who watched the performance on TV were unable to understand their behavior. So, I imagine that my mentor felt the need to foster a researcher in contemporary American politics."

Subsequently, Professor Machidori served as an assistant professor at Osaka University and as a researcher at the University of Wisconsin. In 2004, he joined the faculty of Kyoto University. Political science is really imperfect, since it can explain political phenomena only partially. However, this lack of perfection makes political science extremely interesting, he said. "You can remain curious since you encounter interesting phenomena day after day, and you find problems that need to be resolved." In his view "Since we are social scientists, we must of course explore scientific findings. At the same time, however, we must also work hard to make politics understandable for people living in the contemporary society." Finally, Professor Machidori emphasizes, "It is truly important that political scientists explain to the public the logic that influences political phenomena in the contemporary society."

View from Bangkok

Politics has always been of keen interest to me. This explains why I decided to study for a doctoral degree in politics at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), in the UK. While there, I focused on the issue of Thai national identity and nationalism, and how these issues impacted Thailand's relations with Myanmar, formerly Burma. I graduated from SOAS in 2002.

Twelve years on, and now residing in Japan, I find that the subject of politics and national identity has never gone out of fashion. Indeed, national identity has continued to be underlined and maneuvered by political leaders in the face of challenges both within and outside national borders. Identity helps separate "them" from "us," making ourselves seemingly more visible and thus confirming our existence. But political actors often exploit the identity-making process for different political purposes. It is this complexity that has galvanized my interest in this issue, particularly at this critical period for politics in Thailand.

For those who have followed the drama of Thai politics, since the last military coup in 2006, it is recognized that one of the most prominent national identities of Thailand—the monarchy—has become a key factor behind a deep polarization of Thai society. Therefore, my current research focuses on the role of the Thai monarchy in politics, particularly as the royal transition in Thailand is imminent.

In Southeast Asia, some monarchies have successfully entrenched their rule against the tide of democracy, while others are potentially becoming the target of annihilation. At present, four out of ten Southeast Asian nations—Thailand, Cambodia, Brunei, and Malaysia—preserve various forms of monarchy, ranging across absolute, constitutional, and ceremonial. In the case of Thailand, King Bhumibol Adulyadej, a supposedly constitutional monarch, remains the world's longest reigning sovereign and sits at the epicenter of the Thai political entity. His coronation took place in 1946, following the mysterious death of his brother King Ananda Mahidol.

Throughout the past 80 years, while Thailand adopted a democratic model of governance to replace the *ancien régime*, the military has imposingly dominated the Thai political arena, while working intimately with the monarchy in cultivating a particular mode of politics whereby civilian governments were kept vulnerable, or faced the possibility of being toppled should they pose a menace or cultivate a "too powerful" position. Under such conditions, military coups were therefore not uncommon, especially as a tool to undermine strong civilian governments. The 2006 coup in Thailand was staged precisely because of the fear among the elite of the weakening status of the monarchy in politics.

But conducting research on the issue of the Thai monarchy is a risky exercise and requires a degree of courage. This is because the monarchy is still protected under the severe *lèse-majesté* law, or the crime of injury to royalty, which is defined by Article 112 of the Thai Criminal Code. This law states that defamatory, insulting, or threatening comments about the king, queen, or regent are punishable by three to 15 years in prison. The *lèse-majesté* law has been used arbitrarily to "defend" the monarchy from all kinds of criticism. Escalating cases of *lèse-majesté* have been evident in the past few years, reflecting the deteriorating condition of freedom of expression in Thailand.

As an academic and as a political scientist, I feel compelled to uphold my courage in pursuing research on this vital, yet contentious, topic. I am privileged to be a member of Kyoto University where academic freedom is fully guaranteed. There is nothing more important for a researcher than the space and freedom to engage in investigative studies that are supported by critical, principled, and unfettered analysis.

Pavin CHACHAVALPONGPUN
- Born in 1971
- Field of specialization: political science, foreign policy and international relations
- Ph.D., University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies
- Associate Professor, Center for Southeast Asian Studies
- URL http://www.cseas.kyoto-u.ac.jp/en/2013/03/chachavalpongpun-pavin/

"Through my research activities, I want to help resolve Thailand's various problems."

Associate Professor Pavin Chachavalpongpun said that since his childhood he has always been eager to study. "For my parents, I was the easiest to manage among their five children," he said with a smile, "as my parents were always having to tell my four elder brothers and sisters to do their homework." Driven by his aspiration to become a diplomat, he majored in political science and international relations at university. His dream came true when he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand upon graduation from the university. As a diplomat, he received a scholarship to study in the UK, where he earned his PhD. After graduation, he served at the Thai embassy in Singapore for four years. In this way he enjoyed smooth sailing as a diplomat up until 2006, when a military coup took place in Thailand. Following the collapse of the previous regime, Dr. Pavin resigned from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs because he strongly opposed the military rule. Having decided to become a researcher as his second career, he began working at a research institute in Singapore. Eventually, however, he found it difficult to remain independent from the political influence of Thailand. In 2012, he joined Kyoto University in a quest for full freedom of expression, particularly the right to freely express his views regarding the Thai government and its monarchy system.

Living in Japan has deepened Dr. Pavin's understanding of events in Thailand. "The physical distance enables me to understand Thailand's problems from a broader perspective," he said. He believes that his research activities and political credo are inseparable. In protest at the lèse-majesté law, which is one of his research themes, he posted the image of the palm of his hand, on which were written the words "Ah Kong", the name of a prisoner charge with this law, on his Facebook site. This image evoked a much greater responses than he had expected; to show empathy and support to him, many people worldwide posted images of their palms with the same words written on them. For Dr. Pavin, this show of support on Facebook confirmed the importance of publicizing his political credo as a researcher.

He has now been in Kyoto for two years. During this time, he has developed an affinity with this ancient capital, which he believes to be the most beautiful city in Japan. Although he is busy even on holidays, he sometimes enjoys strolling in Kyoto with his dog, a Chihuahua, which he brought with him from Singapore.

"I want to help reduce the impacts from natural disasters by seeking synergies between my own expertise in geosciences and the public's communication power. In short, I want to become what I like to call a *human geologist*."

In addition to surveying the mechanisms underlying various phenomena relating to earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and other natural disasters, Kyoto University is committed to research activities concerning the social and economic impacts of such disasters, and ways to mitigate them. In recognition of the University's remarkable achievements in these academic areas, as well as its advanced research environment, researchers in diverse academic fields have gathered at Kyoto University from around the world. This time, your correspondent had the pleasure of hearing from Ms. Farah Mulyasari, a Japanese government-sponsored student from Indonesia, who is committed to studies of disaster reduction, focusing on the roles of local communities.

What first made you interested in natural disasters?

My father is a geologist, and when I was little, he often took me on his fieldwork trips, not only in Indonesia but also overseas. I began paying attention to local people's lifestyles, particularly when I went abroad. Gradually, I became interested in the interface between the geosciences and the daily lives of local people. When I was 11 years old, my family moved to the Netherlands and stayed there for five years. At Dutch school, I learned various languages, which made me interested in linguistics and international relations. When I told my father that I wanted to major in international relations, he opposed my idea, saying, "You should study geology, since it is our *family legacy*." So I returned to Indonesia to study geology at university. Upon graduation, I married a researcher in the geosciences. So, yes, probably, geology is our family legacy!

When did you shift your research target from geology to natural disasters?

In 1999 I went to Germany with my husband. During our five-year stay in Germany, I studied geosciences in a master's program. While searching for fossils, I happened to find an oil trap. This discovery led me to consider the relations between geosciences and the daily lives of local people. I began to consider in what way my knowledge of geosciences could benefit local people, both economically and socially. I then I began to wish that I could help people through my expertise. In Indonesia, we frequently experience various natural disasters. The geosciences can help people facing such disasters—at least to some extent. Communicating information about the risk of volcanic eruptions, for instance, can help reduce their impact. Through this view, I began collecting data from satellite photos to prepare eruption models. I also studied lava flows, and estimated potential damage to farms, houses, and the daily lives of local people. As a crucial issue, I researched the most effective types of initiatives that the national and local governments could undertake.

I heard that you were back in Indonesia when the great earthquake in the Indian Ocean off Sumatra and the great tsunami of Aceh occurred on December 26, 2004.

Yes. I was utterly shocked by the disaster. As a means to reduce the impacts of such natural disasters, I developed a concept that I call simply "communication of disaster risks." The focus of this concept is just how to effectively communicate the potential risk of disaster. In Bandung, for instance, we have three community organizations: a women's group, a young people's group, and an Islamic faith-based group. Of the three, the women's group and the young people's group are particularly active. The women's group works with local authorities to address health problems and promote social education. Since people engaged in such activities maintain close relations with the community as a whole, they have considerable influence, as well as communication power. Taking advantage of the communication power of such groups, I am searching for ways to mitigate the impacts of natural disasters, and thereby promote disaster reduction.

What are the unique points of your research program?

In disaster prevention and reduction, I believe that grassroots communities must take the initiatives, rather than waiting for instructions to be issued by the authorities. I seek to develop the grassroots power to enable people to take such initiatives. This I believe is an innovative point. By developing communication channels between local governments and people at the grassroots, I believe we can fill in the information gaps between the two parties. When the government offers information to residents, there are various levels on the part of receivers of the information: individuals, communities, regions, etc. Taking advantage of the communication power of grassroots groups, we can fill in the information gaps between those diverse levels.

You came to Japan to study at Kyoto University in 2010. Would you tell me why you chose Japan and Kyoto University?

Since both Indonesia and Japan endure frequent natural disasters, I thought that I would be able to learn in Japan about risk reduction approaches that would also be applicable in Indonesia. I also decided to enroll at Kyoto University, since it places a priority on studies concerning disaster reduction. In particular, the laboratory of Professor Rajib Shaw collaborates with various international organizations and engages in practical studies with a specific focus on fieldwork.

While you are in Japan, the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred. What was your impression of this incident as a researcher of disaster risk communication?

I was impressed by the fact that the measures that Japan takes against natural disasters feature a good balance between tangible and intangible aspects. As regards the intangible aspects, education in disaster reduction is provided even to young children. In 2010, when my family lived in Kyoto for a year, my children attended a childcare center. I often heard from them that at the childcare center they had emergency drills and explanations about earthquakes. Since Indonesian childcare centers do not include such programs, I want to introduce them to Indonesia. After completing my doctoral program at Kyoto University, I hope to return to Indonesia and continue my research activities into disaster reduction, applying the findings I have made here in Kyoto.

Farah MULYASARI
- Born in 1976
- Currently the third-year doctoral student at the Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies, Kyoto University

Swiss-Kyoto Symposium Held at Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich

November 21-22, 2013

The Swiss-Kyoto Symposium was held at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich on November 21–22, 2013. The event was held in cooperation between Kyoto University, ETH Zurich (ETHZ), the University of Zurich (UZH), and EPF Lausanne (EPFL) in advance of next year's 150th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Switzerland and Japan.

The symposium represents part of Kyoto University's efforts under its new international strategy, which was formulated in June 2013 to promote the further development of the university as a world-class institution of higher learning, and to consolidate its global position as a true leading university. Over 350 members from the participating institutions gathered over the two-day period of the symposium with the aim of raising the international presence of the institutions, widely communicating research achievements, and promoting international cooperative research.

The first day of the symposium opened with addresses by Professor Ralph Eichler, president of ETHZ; Dr. Hiroshi Matsumoto, president of Kyoto University; Professor Michael Hengartner, president-elect of UZH; and Professor Karl Aberer vice-president of EPFL. Those addresses were followed by a welcome speech by H.E. Mr. Ryuhei Maeda, ambassador of Japan to Switzerland. In his speech, President Matsumoto spoke of his anticipation for the deepening of ties between the four universities, and the research advancements that would surely come through the opportunities for networking between researchers.

After the opening addresses, a signing ceremony was held for the conclusion of a memorandum for academic cooperation and exchange between Kyoto University and UZH. The agreement was signed by President Matsumoto and Professor Daniel Wyler, vice-president of UZH. The signing ceremony was followed by presentations introducing the four universities involved in the symposium. The presentations were given by Professor Roland Siegwart, vice-president for research and corporate relations of ETHZ; Professor Kiyoshi Yoshikawa, executive vice-president for research of Kyoto University; Professor Daniel Wyler, vice-president of UZH; and Professor Karl Aberer, vice-president of EPFL. Those presentations were followed by keynote lectures by Professor Shigekazu Nagata of Kyoto University's Graduate School of Medicine and Professor Klaas Enno Stephan of the Institute for Biomedical Engineering of ETH and UZH.

In afternoon of the first day, the participating scholars divided into sixteen groups for parallel academic sessions held at various locations on the campuses of the Swiss universities. The topics of the sessions included such diverse fields as tissue engineering, energy science, economics, and philosophy. In addition to researchers from the four universities, many delegates from various Swiss organizations and institutions also participated in the sessions, engaging in the enthusiastic discussions on future research collaboration.

In the evening, presentations on various forms of support programs for collaborative research were given by Dr. Keiichi Kodaira, director of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) Liaison Office in Bonn and Jean-Luc Barras, head of International Relations of the Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF). The presentations were followed by a dinner reception, which provided the assembled scholars with an opportunity to get to know one another in an informal setting.

The parallel academic sessions continued on the second day of the symposium, and the participants were given the chance to visit the Swiss institutions' research laboratories. In the afternoon, a plenary wrap-up session was held in which representatives from each session reported the achievements of the two days' discussions. The reports introduced cutting-edge research projects and discussed prospects for future education and research collaboration.

The symposium concluded with closing remarks by representatives from all four institutions, including Professor Michiaki Mishima, Kyoto University's executive vice-president for international affairs and hospital administration. Plans are currently being made for a follow-up symposium to be held at Kyoto University, inviting members from the three Swiss institutions.

Vice-President Wyler (left) and President Matsumoto (right) sign the memorandum for academic cooperation and exchange

The plenary wrap-up session (Photograph by Heidi Hostettler)

Kyoto University The R/Lead International Project Final Competition

December 14, 2013

The Organization for the Promotion of International Relations (OPIR) has hosted its Final Competition for students participating in the Read;Lead (R/Lead) International Project, which is a university-funded discussion and study-group project. R/Lead was developed under the KU Book Club to enhance interaction and discussion between International and Japanese students through English group-selected reading materials.

Keynote Speaker, Mr. Streeter, Director of British Council, Japan

Kyoto University invited a special guest, Director of British Council Japan Mr. Jeff Streeter, as a keynote speaker. Mr. Streeter gave an inspiring speech titled: "Reading a 21st Century Skill?" Mr. Streeter, who is also an expert on the English Language as well as English Literature, talked about how important it is to ensure that students are equipped with the skills necessary in a 21st century global society. However, Mr. Streeter also noted that today's technology is changing the way that people read. To further develop critical thinking and other skills that are applicable to a growing society, it is absolutely necessary that people read. Mr. Streeter's pre-competition speech ignited the passion of everyone present.

Groups participating in the final competition were randomly issued a debate topic. These debate topics corresponded to books selected by the R/Lead Secretariat. The books which the R/Lead Secretariat selected for this competition were: (1) Plague and Pandemic Alert, (2) Google, and (3) YouTube. Once the groups were issued their debate topics, they were shown to their designated rooms and allowed 45 minutes to discuss their topic and prepare a short presentation. The groups then gave an 8 minute debate-style presentation in the format of their choosing. Although the facilitators were allowed to coach their groups during their discussion and preparation session, they were not allowed to participate directly in the final presentation.

This final competition was honored with the presence of 4 esteemed judges: Mr. Streeter, Director of the British Council Japan; Mr. Masao Kawabata, Advisory of the Eiken Foundation; Mr. Jason Good, Founder and President of Booksmart Inc. and Prof. Junichi Mori, Vice President of International Affairs / Director General of the OPIR.

R/Lead Final Competition was a great success. The R/Lead team which earned the Best Practice Award visited National Taiwan University from December 22nd 2013, until the 24th 2013, to another round of discussions with the Taiwan University book club.

The following groups, participants and facilitators were awarded the following.

-The R/Lead Best Practice Award was awarded to Hyejin Namgung (2nd year, Faculty of Agriculture) and her team members

-The R/Lead Good Practice Award was awarded the team of Sunao Hachiri (2nd year, Faculty of Law) and his team members

-The Best Facilitator Award was awarded to Aleksandar Shurbevski (2nd Year, Doctoral Student, Graduate School of Informatics)

-The Outstanding Achievement Award was awarded to Yu Pan (1st Year, Master Student, Graduate School of Engineering)

-The IELTS Award was awarded to Takaki Oya (2nd Year, Faculty of Economics)

-The Eiken Award was awarded to Ryutaro Sato (2nd Year, Faculty of Economics)

-The Booksmart Award was awarded to Kaori Taneno (4th Year, Faculty of Letters)

The Best R/Lead Award winning team and Prof. Mori, OPIR

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祇園祭

The Gion Festival: Highlight of the Summer in Japan's Ancient Capital

With the advent of July, the entire city of Kyoto is brightened by the colorful decorations of the Gion Festival, one of Japan's three major festivals. Throughout the month, festive events take place all over Kyoto, a fact that makes the scale of the celebrations unparalleled in Japan. In Kyoto, there is never a day in summer that passes without the bustle of a gala event.

The festival originated in 869, when Kyoto, then Japan's capital, was hit by a plague epidemic. Attributing the epidemic to the curse of the god of Yasaka Shrine, the emperor sought to appease the god by erecting 66 halberds, one for each province in old Japan. Eventually, the ritual came to be observed by the townsfolk and it developed into the huge event that it is today. To date, the festival has been observed over nearly 1,150 years, with its float ceremony. Also, it is inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

Various types of floats, some featuring tall pikes and others representing mountains, assemble in diverse districts in Kyoto, from Aburanokoji Road with its long-established shops, to Muromachi Street, lined by kimono and textile wholesalers, and even to Karasuma Street in the business area. In each district, residents gather to assemble and decorate their floats. At the same time, musicians begin playing in a festive mood.

On the day before the grand parade, all the floats are fully decorated. The festival culminates at twilight, when the lanterns hanging from the floats are lit and the music begins. The streets where the floats are stationed become crowded with spectators. Some private houses display their valuable family heirlooms, particularly folding screens and other artistic works. It is as though the entire district turns into an art gallery.

This year, the grand parade will be held twice (July 17 and 24) on different routes. The original festival style, comprising two grand parades, will be revived for the first time in half a century.

On the eve of the festival, more than 400,000 people gather each year. The view of a string of lanterns hanging from a float is truly spectacular.

Tapestries surrounding the floats comprise Nishijin textiles designed by local artists in Kyoto, and valuable imported fabrics, including Gobelin tapestries. Hence the floats are known as "moving art galleries."

One of the highlights of the parade is the turning of the large-wheeled float at intersections. All people pulling it work together to turn the heavy float by inserting bamboo poles underneath the wooden cart that measures more than two meters in length. This dynamic scene represents an incredible feat of skill and teamwork.

A boy on the leading *Naginata-boko* float cuts a straw rope with a sword and performs a sacred dance.

The floats have different designs and decorations. The largest one, about 25 meters in height and about 12 tons in weight, is pulled by 40 people, comprising local residents, Japanese and international students, and volunteers. Since 2001, female can also participate to pull the floats.